

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD
MINUTES

Date: August 4, 2021
Time: 10:00am
Place: Via Zoom Meeting
Egremont

Present at the meeting in person were Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie.

Others present via zoom: Joan Goodkind, Chuck Ogden, Juliette Haas, Marj Wexler, Mary McGurn, Judy and Mark Canavan, and for parts of the meeting Bruce Bernstein and Jeff Lazarus.

The meeting was audio and video recorded.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the July 20 and July 26 meeting were accepted with minor edits.

SCHEDULED ISSUES:

Technology Team member Jeff Lazarus updated the Board on several Broadband issues.

1. The team has agreed on an income subsidy for Fiber Connect service that follows guidelines of other organizations in that a subscriber can show proof they participate in a low income supplemental program such as SNAP, MassHealth, or free school lunch.

2. The team met with state officials who have spelled out the steps required to obtain the pole location easement for Brookvale and Hilltop Roads. Fiber Connect has to submit a written detailed proposal. It is clear the Town has no responsibility in this area so any help being given by the Town is totally voluntary. Selectboard member Brazie noted that there is a chance that the Town may be able to lend monetary help through the American Recovery Program Act. MassBroadband Institute has also offered to help.

3. Fiber Connect is delinquent in four areas of the agreement with the Town.

A. Security agreement was drafted as boiler plate by Fiber Connect. The Town's team has sent it back for specific revisions. A revised agreement has not been returned.

B. To the town's knowledge no UCC filing has been made with the Town's Clerk office.

C. No \$50,000 security bond has been received. Fiber Connect says that they are told this is a town form. Mary Brazie said that is not true and that all other contractors who need to supply this document do so.

D. No Insurance Certificate showing the Town as an additional insured has been received. MassBroadband Institute is also looking for this document. Mary McGurn noted that this is in hand and will be sent to all soon.

The Board agreed to ask Legal Counsel to send a written request for these items to Fiber Connect. It was noted that none of these documents affect the substance of the build out work.

NEW BUSINESS:

Judy and Mark Canavan have applied for a special permit for a temporary travel home on their property at 41 Millard Road while they construct their home. Septic and water issues have been approved by the Board of Health. The mobile home will not be used on a permanent basis. Mr. Canavan noted that when cold weather comes they may stay in a local motel. The Board voted unanimously to approve the special permit through January 1, 2022.

Marj Wexler presented a request from the Green Committee to place 2 clothing bins from Apparel Impact at the Transfer Station. There is no cost. Currently clothing and other textiles are collected in a garbage can in the Swap Shop and Juliette Haas takes them to Goodwill. The two bins, which will take up a 7' wide area, will be near the bulky plastics container. The Board voted unanimously to approve the request.

The Town has received a request to release its right of first refusal on land owned by the Burdsall family that is in Chapter 61 Forestry. A local family has a purchase and sales agreement on the whole 50 acre lot, and will remove 2 acres from Chapter 61 to build a house. The Town has 120 days from July 9 to vote to release its option. The Conservation Commission has already voted to do so. The Planning Board had questions and will discuss further at the next meeting. It has been reported that the property is in probate. Legal Counsel will be asked if the land being in probate has any bearing on the request for a right of first refusal. The Board deferred action on the request to a later meeting.

Juliette Haas reported that the 36 month contract with Sunwave for discounted electric supply for the town's buildings has expired. As the Town's current aggregation rate is cheaper she opted not to renew the contract. The Town's electric supply will revert to the National Grid, then Juliette will revert them to the Colonial Power Aggregation program.

The Board agreed to plan a Halloween event similar to last years, at French Park, on October 30.

The Board agreed that Vice-Chairman Lucinda Vermeulen and Mary McGurn will interview Egremont's oldest resident, Ruth Silberman, who is 102, and post a video of the interview on the town's youtube site and publish a printed version in the next town newsletter.

The Board accepted Amy Pulver's resignation from the Finance Committee with regrets and congratulations on her new position with the Town of Great Barrington.

Bruce Bernstein, though unable to stay in the meeting for this discussion, wondered why Egremont's public health nurse did not attend SAGE Triad meetings. One of the nurses, Nancy Slattery, will attend the next meeting. The Health Alliance received a grant to hire additional nurses and is re-assessing the rolls of their nurses, who have been dedicated to COVID-19 over the last year and a half.

Richard Allen solicited new members for the Affordable Housing Committee. Three residents expressed interest. One of whom is an experienced building contractor and project

manager. Chairman McGurn proposed the Board hire him using American Recovery Plan Act funds to help move an affordable housing project further. He will be invited to the Board's next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

In response to the letter from Comprehensive Environmental Inc, the Board will submit a written response which expresses the Board's support of the Mount Washington Road reconstruction project and expresses the importance of the reconstruction of the road. The Road Superintendent has done the same and the Conservation Commission has verbally expressed its support.

The Historical Commission will be asked to share its plans for the August 28 town birthday celebration.

Juliette Haas will research if the Town can opt back into the State Mosquito Control program, which will only spray if a public health emergency due to mosquito's testing positive for such diseases as West Nile Virus is declared.

GRANTS:

The Board reviewed possible uses of the \$126,126 the Town was granted under the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA). The Board agreed to seek a consultant/administrator for the purposes of administering this program. Other possible uses of the funds are

Infrastructure investments:

Water - leak detection equipment, Standby system, backup pumps, secure storage, video surveillance, internet to the plant

Broadband - the \$10,000 for Wi-fi at the park would be allowable

Service to un-served and under-served households

Brookvale Road

Affordable Housing

Public Safety staffing for response to COVID-19. Staff an EMT or First Responder in the Fire Station for the day. Duties must include response to COVID-19 (vaccines, testing)

Park maintenance and staffing.

Assistance to households:

Housing, rent, utilities

Assistance with food and nutrition programs - Berkshire Bounty

Affordable Housing

Assistance to small businesses and non-profits who suffered negative economic impact of the pandemic.

Assistance to households who can prove they experienced negative economic impact from the pandemic. This assistance has to be reasonably proportional to the negative impact.

At 11:59pm the meeting was recessed to 2:00pm.

At 2:01pm the meeting was called back to order.

Present at the meeting in person were Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie.

Others present via zoom: Chuck Ogden, Juliette Haas, Mary McGurn.

GRANTS:

Juliette Haas said that the Municipal Air Sensor Grant was geared more toward inner city town's then rural, but agreed to look at it further and make a case for getting a unit for Egremont. The unit requires a space outside, but under cover with electricity and wi-fi.

Juliette Haas reported that the Town was awarded a \$40,000 Municipal Vulnerability Grant program grant, less than the \$112,000 requested. Next steps will include a community meeting to begin the process of drafting an action plan, which will need to be submitted in June of 2022.

COVID-19:

In light of the rising cases of Covid, the Board discussed with Board of Health Chairman Chuck Ogden the possibility of a mask, vaccine, and testing mandate for town employees. It was agreed to keep the current general rules in place, which requires anyone entering town hall to be masked, and any non-vaccinated employee to wear a mask.

FOLLOW UPS:

The Board noted that the Affordable Housing seems not clear on the fact that the Board had proposed no more than 10 units on the town property and wanted ownership and rental. The role of Berkshire Regional Planning's Technical Assistant Ken Walto with the Committee is not clear.

SELECTMEN'S ITEMS:

The Board's next meeting will be Tuesday, August 17 at 10:00am.

Adjournment took place at 2:48pm

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

minutes.22/aug4

The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.